

Safeguarder Training

DESIGN, CONTENT AND EVALUATION

ABRIDGED VERSION

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1 Background

1.1 Introduction

This is an abridged version of the full document which sets out guidance on the design, content and evaluation of safeguarder training. A copy of the full document is available from the Scottish Executive.

This guidance assumes the need to ensure that the training of safeguarders is of a high quality and is consistent throughout Scotland. This consistency should not only be in the content, but in outcomes, the amount of training offered, assessment and evaluation. It is hoped that such an approach will mean that children's hearings, courts, children, families and professionals in any part of Scotland will receive a comparable experience from safeguarders.

1.2 Safeguarders

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 directs that each local authority must maintain a panel of safeguarders and appointments to this panel are made after consultation with the sheriff principal and the chairman of the children's panel. Safeguarders come from a variety of backgrounds including law and social work and there is a wide diversity of life experience. The local authority is responsible for the ongoing administration of the panel of safeguarders.

The overall remit of the safeguarder is 'to safeguard the interests of the child in the proceedings' whether that be in a children's hearing or court (s.41(1)(a) of the Act).*

1.3 The training of safeguarders

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 makes provision for the training of safeguarders. The statutory duty rests with the local authority and Scottish Ministers exercise their discretionary power to assist safeguarder training by financing the provision of the children's hearings training officer structure throughout Scotland. Part of the responsibility of training officers is the organisation and delivery of training for safeguarders. This includes the preparation of training materials.

1.4 The competence model

The competences in this guidance describe what a safeguarder should be able to do on completion of the appropriate induction training. Safeguarders are required to satisfactorily complete this training before the local authority is able to confirm their appointment. Because of the confidential nature of their task, safeguarders are unable

* It should be noted that throughout this document, the term 'child' refers to a child or young person aged from 0 to 16 years of age (and in certain circumstances as laid down by legislation up to 18 years).

to practise their skills and demonstrate their competence under supervision during the training period. Therefore satisfactory completion of training involves an assessment of a safeguarder's readiness to take up their appointment rather than a demonstration of actual competence.

1.5 The scope of this abridged version of the guidance

This guidance covers the induction training and describes the competences required of safeguarders on taking up appointment. It refers to other training arranged by the CHTOs which includes specific in-service training and refresher courses. Training is cumulative, based on adult learning principles.

The guidance also includes an approach to the evaluation of the progress and performance of individual safeguarders during the induction training. Such an assessment of 'readiness to serve' provides a protection for the children and families who come to hearings and courts and for the system itself.

Any evaluation must also include a consideration of the effectiveness of the training undertaken. Some details about quality assurance are also included to highlight the importance of ensuring that training is 'fit for purpose'.

2 Delivery of Training

2.1 Introduction

This section sets out the various types of training programmes that should be provided for safeguarders and explains the training methods that should be used to deliver effective training.

2.2 Training provision

Safeguarders should be provided with a range of training programmes designed to suit their needs at different stages of their appointment.

2.2.1 Induction training

Safeguarders should be appointed subject to the satisfactory completion of induction training. The CHTOs and their support teams are responsible for the delivery of the induction training. Although the structure of the course may vary from area to area, the content will be similar being designed to comply with the guidance.

An induction programme will involve at least 14.5 contact hours of training divided into two single days and one local evening session plus a substantial amount of directed reading. The programme will be offered at two fixed points during the year (late May and early October) and the single days at two venues. It is expected that one venue will cover the local authority areas covered by the CHTUs based at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and the other by the CHTUs based at the Universities of Aberdeen and St Andrews. However, the final decision on venues will depend on the numbers of safeguarders recruited and their location.

The induction course provides the foundation of knowledge that safeguarders need to enable them to fulfil their statutory duties. It also provides them with opportunities to develop and practise certain skills.

2.2.2 Induction - follow-up training

Induction training involves an intensive learning process. It is essential therefore that early in their appointment safeguarders be given the opportunity to review and revise aspects of the induction training and to build on their experience.

The timescale between the end of induction training and the beginning of follow-up training therefore will vary in response to local situations such as the number and nature of appointments. However, it is expected that the first session of follow-up training will normally take place after three appointments as a safeguarder and no longer than one year after the completion of induction training. The follow-up session will include three to five hours of training and will be offered in the same groupings as induction training.

2.2.3 In-service training

Each year CHTOs will arrange in-service training sessions for safeguarders. It is expected that each safeguarder will attend one in-service session a year which will involve three to five hours of training.

The sessions will be arranged for groups of panels of safeguarders in the areas covered by each CHTU. The content of in-service training sessions will be arranged in response to local training needs, as agreed by training committees.

A national school for safeguarders will be held every two years and organised by each CHTU on a rotational basis.

2.2.4 Refresher courses

CHTOs will arrange refresher courses for safeguarders as required in response to local needs. These courses will involve a review and revision of practice and be very practical in nature.

2.2.5 Training for safeguarders who assist with training sessions

Safeguarders may assist in the training of other safeguarders where this is required. They will be recruited and selected for this role by the CHTOs. Following selection, they will then undertake training and be assessed as to their competence by the CHTO on an ongoing basis.

2.2.6 Local training

Local authorities are encouraged to arrange their own local training programmes. Some sessions may be dedicated to meetings with safeguarders on their own, or with panel members, sheriffs, social workers, teachers and representatives of other professional agencies to give safeguarders opportunities to discuss issues of common concern. The CHTOs will not normally be directly involved in the organisation of these sessions although they may be asked to contribute at the planning stage or to deliver some of the sessions.

2.3 Methods of training

Training programmes should be designed to emphasise the importance of creating “learning situations” rather than “teaching situations”. Considerable personal learning is achieved when safeguarders are given opportunities to reflect on their values and perceptions and to discuss their experiences with other safeguarders. Courses should therefore provide a balance between informal group activities and more formal learning situations in order to ensure that participants, whilst acquiring new patterns of behaviour, assimilate as much information as possible.

The strategy for safeguarder training should be nationally consistent and should use all the best methods of adult learning.

2.3.3 Observations

Safeguarders must be given opportunities to observe children's hearings and a proof hearing in court during the induction training period. Observations will enable them to experience the dynamics of children's hearings and courts, to observe aspects of procedure and practice and, as a result, to put their training into context.

2.3.4 The children's hearings training resource manual

The national manual is for children's panel members, CPAC members and safeguarders. There is a separate booklet which contains extracts of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Rules 1996 and the Children's Hearings (Legal Representation) (Scotland) Rules 2002. Another booklet, for safeguarders only, will cover court rules and process, interviewing techniques and report writing. Each safeguarder will be issued with a copy of the manual and booklets before the first session of induction training.

2.3.5 Directed reading

Before and between sessions of induction training safeguarders will be expected to spend a substantial amount of time in private study. To assist with this, the course materials will include guided reading from the training resource manual and accompanying booklets. Distance learning materials covering parts of the induction training programme will be developed by CHTOs.

2.4 Conclusion

Training must be nationally consistent, interesting, stimulating and suited to the needs of safeguarders throughout their period of appointment. It must be based on sound principles of adult learning and be delivered using a variety of appropriate training methods in suitable learning environments.

3 Competences

3.1 Introduction

This section lays out the competences required of safeguarders. They are based on an analysis of the key purpose of the task and role of safeguarders as well as considerations of best practice, reference to recent government reports and research.

The role is broken down into elements of competence that describes the functions which help to achieve the key role. Competence is the product of knowledge, skills and values.

3.2 Value requirements

Because of the responsibilities that safeguarders carry and the influence that they can have on the lives of vulnerable people, they must also meet particular value requirements. As well as being skilled and knowledgeable, they must treat people with respect and be honest, open and reliable. They must be self-aware and critically reflective.

Children and adults who come to hearings and courts reflect the diverse, multi-cultural nature of life in Scotland today. Safeguarders come into the lives of people whose life chances may have been adversely affected by factors such as poverty, ill health, loss, disadvantage, discrimination and disability.

Therefore, safeguarders must demonstrate that they:

- treat every child as an individual
- respect and value uniqueness and diversity
- consider the child in the context of his/her family, race, gender, sexuality, community, class, culture, religion, language, or any physical, emotional or learning disability
- acknowledge individuals' views, personal beliefs and preferences
- promote the rights of the child
- identify and question their own values and prejudices, and consider the implications of these in their practice as a safeguarder.

3.3 Competences

The following standards apply to those safeguarders completing induction training. The order of the elements and performance criteria does not imply a ranking nor necessarily a chronological sequence of process. No one performance criterion is seen to be more significant than others.

On taking up their appointment, safeguarders must be able to:

- fulfil their statutory responsibilities and work within procedures
- work effectively as an individual
- communicate purposefully and effectively
- assimilate and analyse information in order to assess the needs of the child and make a reasoned recommendation
- consolidate experience, knowledge and understanding in order to develop own skills.

3.3.1 Fulfil statutory responsibilities and work within procedures

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder using the legal procedures and knowing when to consult with others who have expertise and implementing best practice. It includes practice in hearings and courts including making recommendations and the preparation of reports.

Performance criteria

- 1 Focus on the welfare of the child.
- 2 Store hearing and court papers safely and confidentially, returning them to the reporter/sheriff clerk after the individual appointment is discharged.
- 3 Acknowledge any gaps in own legal knowledge and seek information or advice from relevant sources to rectify this.
- 4 Be clear about the purpose of appointment to an individual case.
- 5 Help the child to express his or her views.
- 6 Explain to the child and family the reason for appointment and own function.
- 7 Help to ensure the rights of the child are maintained throughout the process.
- 8 Be able to articulate the range of possible decisions and outcomes to the child and family.
- 9 Consider whether compulsory measures need to be taken to protect, guide, treat or control the child.
- 10 Consider, where necessary, arrangements for contact between children, their parents and significant others.
- 11 Articulate own recommendation confidently with clear reasons for it.
- 12 Prepare a clear and concise written report for a children's hearing (or court when required) within the set timescales.
- 13 Recognise when it is necessary to instruct a solicitor/counsel on own behalf.
- 14 Recognise when to cite witnesses and be able to examine them and be party to proceedings in court in a capable and responsible manner.
- 15 Keep any information acquired confidentially.

Underpinning knowledge

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- the structure and content of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Rules 1996, the Children's Hearings (Legal Representation) (Scotland) Rules 2002
- the content of the Act of Sederunt (Child Care and Maintenance Rules) 1997
- the Data Protection Act 1984
- how children can be referred to children's hearings and courts
- the procedures which must be followed in a hearing and courts
- different types of hearings and options for decisions
- the interface between children's hearings and the courts
- emergency procedures which aim to protect children
- how procedures in the hearing and court can protect and promote the rights of children
- the history, principles and philosophy of the children's hearings system
- the rights of children (UN Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights)
- the roles and responsibilities of the safeguarder
- the roles and responsibilities of social worker, reporter, child's legal representative, education staff, medical staff, police and others in relation to children in need
- the procedures in relation to permanency planning for children.

3.3.2 Work effectively as an individual

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder being clear about the purpose of and limits of their role and being aware of the roles and responsibilities of others.

Performance criteria

- 1 Read thoroughly the reports received on appointment, being careful not to make pre-judgements.
- 2 Identify key issues arising from the reports, noting any gaps in the information provided.
- 3 Note areas for clarification.
- 4 Anticipate possible difficulties that may arise and devise ways of dealing with these.
- 5 Be clear about the purpose of appointment to the individual case.
- 6 Plan who to see and speak to in order to obtain the necessary information.
- 7 Arrange visits with regard to timing and place in a manner which reflects the circumstances of the case.
- 8 Negotiate access to relevant documents and reports.
- 9 Be sensitive to others' viewpoints, challenging those views when necessary.
- 10 Conduct oneself in an effective and constructive manner in courts and hearings.
- 11 Have an awareness of own style of working and its effectiveness.

Underpinning knowledge

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- effective communication with children, young people, adults, and organisations
- methods of interviewing individuals and families who are reluctant to engage with professionals within the system
- roles and responsibilities of all professionals involved in the children's hearings system including own
- power and authority in relationships between children, young people and adults
- principles of collaborative working
- strategies to cope with own personal feelings and emotions
- strategies to manage personal safety.

3.3.3 Communicate purposefully and effectively

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder being able to communicate in a child-centred way with the child and family members as well as with professionals and at hearings and in court.

Performance criteria

- 1 Communicate in a non-threatening way with children and families in order to engender a degree of confidence and trust.
- 2 Explain to the child and family what is happening during the hearing/court process and their rights within it.
- 3 Gauge the level of understanding of the child and family taking into account ethnic and cultural issues to ensure that own language and style of questioning is appropriate.
- 4 Pace communication with the child, taking into account the child's stage of development, understanding, level of distress and attention span, avoiding overlong sessions.
- 5 Be aware of own and others' non-verbal behaviour and its impact on the child and others.
- 6 Use open-ended questions wherever possible, avoiding leading or shaping what is said by participants.
- 7 Encourage and enable the child to express a view if he or she wishes to do so explaining what will happen to the views and information given
- 8 Listen to others, using appropriate non-verbal signals and by reflecting back own interpretation of what is being communicated both verbally and non-verbally.
- 9 Raise and confront issues which may be delicate to others where it appears relevant to do so.
- 10 Demonstrate sensitivity in situations where there is a high level of emotion such as stress, distress, anger or conflict.
- 11 Make contact with members of agencies which support children's hearings and courts in a way which gains confidence whilst not compromising own independence and credibility.
- 12 Give clear verbal and written presentations to children's hearings, and sheriffs.

Underpinning knowledge

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- stages of child development including needs of children
- impact of race, culture, gender, disability on communication
- how communication may be affected by life experiences
- effective communication with children and adults with sensory impairment, and with physical difficulties or learning difficulties
- effective communication with children and adults for whom English is not their first language
- assertiveness
- impact of anger, anxiety and stress on the communication process
- questioning and listening skills, including the use of open-ended questions.

3.3.4 Assimilate and analyse information in order to assess the needs of the child and make a reasoned recommendation

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder making an assessment of the child's needs and the risk factors involved in his or her situation, considering the relevant resources, and making and giving a reasoned recommendation about the future care of the child.

Performance criteria

- 1 Read reports in order to extract key issues which will help own assessment of the needs of the child.
- 2 Check understanding and interpretation of key issues in reports by asking questions of report writers, child and family members and listening to responses.
- 3 Consider information gained from all parties during own investigations.
- 4 Assess whether there is sufficient information to make a recommendation, and if not, identify what extra is required and from whom.
- 5 Identify and assess the risk factors involved in the child's situation.
- 6 Make an assessment of the child's needs taking account of the child's views, race, language, religion and culture.
- 7 Consider on the basis of the assessment whether compulsory measures of supervision are required.
- 8 Check that assessment fulfils the brief given by the hearing/court.
- 9 Construct a comprehensive written report using terminology which is comprehensible to the family, panel members and court (where applicable) and which separates fact from opinion.
- 10 Make a recommendation from the range of options available, including any conditions e.g. contact.
- 11 Articulate own recommendation to child, family, hearings and court confidently, giving clear reasons for it.
- 12 Take into account information gained during the hearing/court process to reassess own recommendation.

Underpinning knowledge

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- the normal development of a child
- the needs of children at different stages of development and the possible effects of those needs not being met
- the range and diversity of social, family and community structures and lifestyles in Scotland, taking account of race, language, religion and culture
- social and economic factors which influence the lives of children, particularly those in the community in which the safeguarder is serving
- the range of the emotional and psychological reactions to loss, transition and change
- the range and impact of physical, social, sexual and emotional neglect and abuse
- the child protection systems in place and the role of those involved in them
- the concept of risk, risk indicators, their limitations and their application in assessment
- definitions of offending behaviour, consideration of their causes and possible remedies
- patterns of alcohol consumption, drugs and substance abuse and their consequential effect on behaviour
- mental health issues
- resources available to the children's hearing, including what is meant by supervision
- the possible impact on children and families of decisions made by children's hearings.

3.3.5 Consolidate experience, knowledge and understanding in order to develop own skills

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder evaluating his or her own practice and taking responsibility for the development of that practice.

Performance criteria

- 1 Identify gaps in own knowledge and understanding and seek information or advice from relevant sources to rectify this.
- 2 Reflect on own performance identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- 3 Develop strategies for coping with stressful situations.
- 4 Take responsibility for own development as a safeguarder including attending training.

Underpinning knowledge

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- critical analysis, reflective practice and how to transfer learning from one situation to another
- learning styles, analysis of training and development needs and continuance of own development
- coping with stressful situations
- how to manage change
- who to contact within the hearings or court systems for information and advice.

4 Assessment, Evaluation and Feedback

4.1 Introduction

This section describes the process of assessment, evaluation and feedback which are an integral part of all training courses for safeguarders.

Assessment of individual learning constitutes an integral part of any programme of education or training. Safeguarders will be encouraged to assess their own performance throughout their training.

4.2 The rationale for assessing safeguarders

Local authorities are responsible for the recruitment and selection of safeguarders in consultation with the appropriate sheriff principal and chairman of the children's panel. Induction training seeks to develop further the skills and qualities for which safeguarders were selected.

Because of the solitary nature of their task it seems reasonable that, in a national system of justice, there should be a clear mechanism for assessment which might identify gaps in safeguarders' knowledge and competence before they commence service.

On conclusion of the induction course therefore local authorities must decide whether safeguarders have reached the required standard and can be deemed to have "satisfactorily" completed the training.

4.3 The assessment process

The information gained during the assessment process during training will form the basis for ongoing feedback to local authorities on the training needs of safeguarders, to the safeguarders involved and to CHTOs on the effectiveness of training.

Safeguarders should know from the outset how they are to be assessed and should find the process helpful rather than challenging. They should also understand the elements of the assessment process, who will be involved in it, and what steps will be taken if there are any concerns about progress measured against the competences. The process should be open and fair and be operated consistently.

The areas to be covered in the assessment process during the induction course are: **preparation, knowledge, understanding, skills, attitude and participation**. There will be informal feedback after each training session and the CHTO unit will hold a written note of progress.

At the end of the induction course the CHTO will provide the relevant local authority with a brief formal written report on each safeguarder based on progress linked to the

competences and with an assessment of readiness to serve. A copy will also be sent to the safeguarder.

The local authority will take the final decision to confirm the appointment of the safeguarder. The local authority would be expected to liaise with the sheriff principal and the chairman of the children's panel if considering not to confirm a safeguarder's appointment.

Any appeal against the decision not to appoint should be made to the local authority.

4.4 Quality assurance

Ensuring that evaluation is an integral part of training allows for a process of quality assurance to be carried out. Participants will be provided with an evaluation form to complete after every training course. A report on the training incorporating this feedback will be provided after each training session or course by the CHTO. Copies will be distributed to the local authority and the training committee.

Each CHTU will produce an annual report which will contain an account of the work undertaken by the Unit for the year. Copies will be distributed to the appropriate local and national bodies.

Quality assurance helps to protect the children and families who come to hearings and courts, preserves the credibility of the system and ensures national standards and consistency.

4.5 Conclusion

Assessment of satisfactory completion of training should constitute a part of all training undertaken by safeguarders. It may include self-assessment, feedback from peers and assessment and feedback from trainers. Assessment should be part of an ongoing evaluation process. The aim of safeguarder training should be that it is fit for its purpose of preparing safeguarders to make recommendations about the welfare of children and to perform their court duties effectively. The use of the competence model means that there will be consistency and comparability of standards across Scotland. Ensuring that the training of safeguarders is delivered to national standards that are regularly evaluated can only be of benefit to the welfare of Scotland's children.